

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY OSLO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 200392

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, BE, US

SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE: ADVERSE NEWS STORIES APPEAR ON
F-16

REF: BRUSSELS 7786; OSLO 3875

THE FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY DOD IN
RESPONSE TO NEWS STORIES OF THE TYPE CITED IN REFTELS:

(BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED)

QTE: QUESTION: WHAT IS YOUR COMMENT ON REPORTS THAT THE
PENTAGON MAY HAVE OVERSOLD THE PROSPECTS FOR WORLDWIDE
SALES OF THE F-16?

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ANSWER: THOSE REPORTS ARE UNFOUNDED. THERE HAS BEEN NO

OVERSTATEMENT OF POTENTIAL WORLDWIDE INTEREST IN THE F-16 AIRCRAFT. INTEREST IN THE F-16 AIRCRAFT TODAY IS EVERY BIT AS GREAT OR GREATER THAN 14 MONTHS AGO. THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PREFERS THAT THE US AIR FORCE PROGRAM AND THE EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM F-16 PROGRAMS MATURE BEFORE AGREEMENTS ARE REACHED WITH ADDITIONAL COUNTRIES ON SALES OF THE F-16. SEVERAL FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS HAVE ALREADY OFFICIALLY REQUESTED PRICE INFORMATION ON THESE AIRCRAFT; HOWEVER, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET AGREED

TO NEGOTIATE ANY AGREEMENTS ADDITIONAL TO THOSE ALREADY CONSUMMATED WITH OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES. OF COURSE, ALL AGREEMENTS WOULD RECEIVE A THOROUGH REVIEW IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND THEN UNDERGO A FURTHER REVIEW WITH THE CONGRESS. (END UNCLASSIFIED) END QTE

THE FOLLOWING BACKGROUND MATERIAL HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE KNOWN TO RESPECTIVE EPG STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS. IT MAY BE USED WITH APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

(BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL)

QTE: BACKGROUND: ON JUNE 10, 1975, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SIGNED A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND BILATERAL PRELIMINARY CONTRACTS WITH DENMARK, THE NETHERLANDS, NORWAY, AND BELGIUM FOR THE PROCUREMENT AND COPRODUCTION OF THE F-16. THE F-16 WILL REPLACE THE AGING F-104S IN THE INVENTORY OF THE EUROPEAN NATIONS. INITIALLY THE EUROPEANS WILL PROCURE 306 AIRCRAFT (WITH OPTIONS FOR 42 MORE), AND THE US AIR FORCE PLANS TO PROCURE 650 AND STATION 250 OF THEM IN EUROPE. THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ESTIMATED A TOTAL PRODUCTION OF 2,000 F-16S WITH 1,000 OF THIS TOTAL EARMARKED FOR THIRD COUNTRY SALES. INTEREST IN THE F-16 HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD. IRAN HAS REQUESTED LOAS FOR 300 AIRCRAFT. ISRAEL (250) AND SPAIN (75) HAVE REQUESTED PRICE AND AVAILABILITY DATA FOR THE QUANTITIES SHOWN. ADDITIONALLY, JAPAN, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, AND GREECE HAVE REQUESTED TECHNICAL INFORMATION ON THE F-16 FOR COMPARISON STUDIES FOR FIGHTER MODERNIZATION PROGRAMS. (END CONFIDENTIAL) END QTE.

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